FONTAINE'S FABLES

FONTAINE'S FABLES AND ÆSOP'S FABLES

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FONTAINE'S FABLES

WITH WHICH ARE INCLUDED

ÆSOP'S FABLES

Adapted by
EDWIN GILE RICH
Author of "Why-So Stories," etc.

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FONTAINE'S FABLES AND ÆSOP'S FABLES

THE TWO MULES

TWO heavily-laden mules were making a journey together. One was carrying oats and the other a package of silver money collected from the people as a tax upon salt. This tax produced much money for the government, but it bore very hard upon the people, who revolted many times against it.

The mule that carried the silver was proud of his burden, and would not have been relieved of it if he could. As he stepped out he took care that the bells upon his harness should jingle well as became a mule of so much importance.

Suddenly a band of robbers burst into the road, pounced upon the treasure mule, seized it by the bridle, and stopped it short. Struggling to defend itself the unhappy creature groaned and sighed: "Is this then the fate that has been in store for me, that I must fall and perish whilst my fellow traveller escapes free from danger?"

"My friend," exclaimed the mule that carried only the oats, and whom the robbers had not troubled, "it is not always good to have exalted work to do. Had you been like me, a mere slave to a miller, you would not have been in such a bad way now!"

THE HARE AND THE PARTRIDGE

NEVER mock at other people's misfortune; for you cannot tell how soon you yourself may be unhappy. Æsop the sage has given us one or two examples of this truth, and I am going to tell you of another one now.

A hare and a partridge were living very peacefully in a field, when a pack of hounds obliged the hare to seek refuge. He rushed into his hole and succeeded in putting the hounds at fault. But the scent from his over-heated body betrayed him. Old Trusty, philosophising, concluded that this scent came from his hare, and with admirable zeal routed him out. Then old Trusty, who never is at fault, proclaimed that the hare was gone away. The poor unfortunate creature at last died in his hole.

The partridge, his companion, thought fit to soothe his last moments with some scoffing remarks upon his fate. "You boasted of being so swift," she said, "What has come to your feet, then?"

But even as she was chuckling her own turn came. Secure in the belief that her wings would save her, whatever happened, she did not reckon on the cruel talons of the hawk.

THE GARDENER AND HIS LANDLORD

THERE was once a man who was very fond of gardening, for he was half a countryman and half town-bred. He owned in a certain village a fair-sized plot with a field attached, and all enclosed by a hedge. Here sorrel and lettuce grew freely, as well as such flowers as jasmine and wild thyme, and from these his good wife Margot culled many a flower for her high days and holidays.

This state of things was soon disturbed by the visits of a hare, and to such an extent that the man had to go to his landlord and lodge a complaint. "This wretched animal," he said, "comes here and stuffs himself night and morning, and simply laughs at traps and snares. As for stones and sticks they make no difference whatever to him. He must be enchanted."

"Enchanted!" cried the landlord. "I defy enchantment! Were he the devil himself old Tray would soon rout him out in spite of his tricks. I'll rid you of him, my man, never fear!"

"And when?" asked the man.

"Oh, tomorrow, without delay!"

The affair being arranged in this way, on the morrow came the landlord with all his followers. "First of all," he said, "how about breakfast? Your chickens are tender I'll be bound. Come here, my dear," he added, addressing the man's daughter, and then, to her father, "When are you going to let her marry? Hasn't a son-in-law come on the scene yet? My dear man, this positively must be done, you know, you'll

have to put your hand in your pocket to some purpose." So saying he sat down beside the damsel, took her hand, held her by the arm, toyed with her lace, which the girl resented with great self-respect, while the father grew a little uneasy in his mind.

Nevertheless, the cooking went on. There was quite a run on the kitchen.

"How well cured are your hams? They look good."

"Sir," replied the flattered host, "they are yours."

"Oh, come now! Well I'll take them, and that right gladly."

The landlord and his family, his dogs, his horses, and his men-servants, all took breakfast with hearty appetites. He assumed the host's place and privileges, drank his wine and caressed his daughter. After this a crowd of nunters took seats at the breakfast table.

Now everybody was lively and busy with preparations for the hunt. They blew the horns to such purpose that the good man was dumbfounded by the din. Worse than that they made terrible havoc in the poor garden. Good-by to all the neat rows and beds! Good-by to the chickory and the leeks! Good-by to all the herbs!

The hare lay hidden under the leaves of a great cabbage, but being discovered was quickly started, whereupon he rushed to a hole — worse than a hole, a great and horrible gap in the poor hedge, made by the landlord's order, so that they might all burst out of the garden in fine style; for it would have looked ridiculous for them to ride out at the gate.

The poor man objected. "This is fine fun for princes, no

doubt —"; but they let him talk, while dogs and men together did more harm in one hour than all the hares in the province would have done in a century.

Little princes, settle your own quarrels amongst yourselves. It is madness to have recourse to kings. You should never let them engage in your wars, nor even enter your domains.

THE MAN AND HIS IMAGE

THERE once was a man who loved himself very much, and who permitted no rivals in that love. He thought his face and figure the handsomest in all the world. Anything in the shape of a mirror that could show him his own likeness he took care to avoid; for he did not want to be reminded that perhaps he was over-rating his beauty. For this reason he hated looking-glasses and said they were false. He made a great mistake in this respect; but he did not mind, for he was quite content to live in the happiness the mistake afforded him.

To cure him of so grievous an error, officious fate managed matters in such a way that wherever he turned his eyes they would fall on one of those little counsellors that ladies carry and appeal to when they are anxious about their appearance. He found mirrors in the houses; mirrors in the shops; mirrors in the pockets of gallants; mirrors even as ornaments on the waist-belts of ladies.

What was he to do — this poor Narcissus? He thought to avoid all such things by going far away from the haunts of mankind, where he should never have to face a mirror again. But in the woods to which he retreated a clear rivulet ran. He happened into this to look and — saw himself again. Angrily he told himself that his eyes had been deluded by an idle fancy. Henceforth he would keep away from the water! This he tried his utmost to do; but who can resist the beauty

of a woodland stream? There he was and remained, always with that which he had determined to avoid.

My meaning is easily seen. It applies to everybody; for everybody takes some joy in harboring this error. The man in love with himself stands for the soul of each one of us. All the mirrors wherein he saw himself reflected stand for the faults of other people, in which we really see our own faults though we hate to recognise them as such.

THE ANIMALS SICK OF THE PLAGUE

ONE of those dread evils which spread terror far and wide, and which Heaven, in its anger, ordains for the punishment of wickedness upon earth — a plague in fact, and so dire a one as to make rich in one day that grim ferryman who takes a coin from all who cross the river Acheron to the land of the dead — such a plague was once waging war against the animals. All were attacked, although all did not die. So hopeless was the case that not one of them attempted to sustain their sinking lives. Even the sight of food did not rouse them. Wolves and foxes no longer turned eager and calculating eyes upon their gentle and guileless prey. The turtle-doves went no more in cooing pairs, but were content to avoid each other. Love and the joy that comes of love were both at an end.

At length the lion called a council of all the beasts and addressed them in these words: "My dear friends, it seems to me that it is for our sins that this misfortune has fallen upon us. Would it not be well if the most blameworthy among us allowed himself to be offered as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of Heaven? By doing so he might secure our recovery. History tells us that this course is usually pursued in such cases as ours. Let us look into our consciences. For my own part, I freely admit that in order to satisfy my gluttony I have devoured an appalling number of sheep; and yet what had they done to me to deserve such a fate? Nothing that

could be called an offence. Sometimes, indeed, I have gone so far as to eat the shepherd too! On the whole, I think I had better give up myself for this act of sacrifice; that is, if we agree that it is a thing necessary to the general good. And yet I think it would be only fair that every one should declare his sins as well as I; for I could wish that, in justice, it were the most wicked that should perish."

"Sire," said the fox, "you are really too yielding for a king, and your scruples show too much delicacy of feeling. Eating sheep indeed! What of that? — a foolish and rascally tribe! Is that a crime? No! a hundred times no! On the contrary your noble jaws did but do them great honor. As for the shepherd, it may be fairly said that all the harm he got he merited, since he was one of those who fancy they have dominion over the animal kingdom."

Thus spake the fox and every other flatterer in the assembly applauded him. Nor did any seek to inquire deeply into the least pardonable offences of the tiger, the bear, and the other mighty ones. All those of an aggressive nature, right down to the simple watch-dog, were something like saints in their own opinions.

When the ass stood forth in his turn he struck a different note: nothing of fangs and talons and blood. "I remember," he said, "that once in passing a field belonging to a monastery I was urged by hunger, by opportunity, by the tenderness of the grass, and perhaps by the evil one egging me on, to enter and crop just a taste, about as much as the length of my tongue. I know that I did wrong, having really no right there."

At these words all the assembly turned upon him. The wolf took upon himself to make a speech proving without doubt that the ass was an accursed wretch, a mangy brute, who certainly ought to be told off for sacrifice, since through his wickedness all their misfortunes had come about. His peccadillo was judged to be a hanging matter. "What! eat the grass belonging to another? How abominable a crime! Nothing but death could expiate such an outrage!" And forthwith they proved as much to the poor ass.

Accordingly as your power is great or small, the judgments of a court will whiten or blacken your reputation.

THE UNHAPPILY MARRIED MAN

IF goodness were always the companion of beauty I would seek a wife tomorrow; but as divorce between these two is no new thing, and as there are so few lovely forms around lovely souls, do not take it amiss that I refrain from seeking such a rare combination.

I have seen many marriages, but not one of them has held out allurements for me. Nevertheless, nearly the whole four quarters of mankind courageously expose themselves to this the greatest of all hazards, and — the whole four quarters usually repent it.

I will tell you of one who, having repented, found that there was nothing for it but to send home again his quarrelsome, avaricious, and jealous spouse. She was one whom nothing pleased; for her, nothing was right. For her, one rose too late; one went to bed too early. First, it was this, then, it was that, and then again 'twas something else. The servants raged. The husband was at his wit's end. "You think of nothing, sir." "You spend too much." "You gad about, sir." "You are idle." Indeed she had so much to say that, in the end, tired of hearing such a termagant, he sent her to her parents in the country. There she mixed with those who minded the turkeys and pigs until she was thought to be somewhat tamed, when the husband sent for her again.

"Well, my dear, how have you been getting on? How

did you spend your time? Did you like the simple life of the country?"

"Oh, pretty well!" she said, "but what annoyed me was to see the laziness of those people. They are worse there than here. They showed no care whatever for the herds and flocks they were supposed to mind. I didn't forget to let them know what I thought of them. Of course, they didn't like it, and they all hated me in the end."

"Ah! my dear. If you could not get on with people whom you saw for but a moment or so in the day and when they returned in the evening — if you made them tired of you; what will the servants in this house become, who must have you railing at them the whole day long? And what will your poor husband do whom you expect to have near you all day and night too? Return to the village, my dear. Adieu! and if during my life the idea should possess me to have you back again, may I, for my sins, have two such as you for ever at my elbows in the world to come."

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THE RAT RETIRED FROM THE WORLD

THE ancients had a legend which told of a certain rat who, weary of the anxieties of this world, retired to a cheese, therein to live in peace. Profound solitude reigned around the hermit. He worked so hard with his feet and his teeth that in a few days he had a spacious dwelling and food in plenty. What more could he desire? He lived well, and grew large and fat.

One day a deputation from Rat-land waited upon him, begging that out of his abundance he would grant a slight dole towards fitting out a journey to a strange country where the rats hoped to get succour in their great war against the cat tribe. Ratopolis was besieged, and owing to the poverty of the beleaguered republic they were forced to start with empty wallets. They asked but little, believing that in a few days help would arrive.

"My friends," said the hermit, "earthly affairs no longer concern me. In what way could a poor recluse assist you? What could he do but pray for the help you need! My best hopes and wishes you may be assured of." With these words this latest among the saints shut his door.

THE MAIDEN

A CERTAIN damsel of considerable pride made up her mind to choose a husband who should be young, well built, and handsome; of agreeable manners and — note these two points — neither cold nor jealous. Moreover, she held it necessary that he should have means, high birth, intellect; in fact, everything. But whoever was endowed with everything?

The fates were evidently anxious to do their best for her, for they sent her most noteworthy suitors. But these the proud beauty found not half good enough. "What, men like those! You propose them for me! Why, they are pitiable! Look at them — fine types, indeed!" According to her, one was stupid; another's nose was impossible. With this it was one thing; with that it was another; for superior people are disdainful above all things.

After these eligible gentlemen had been dismissed, came others of less worth, and at these too she mocked. "Why," said she, "I would not bemean myself to open the door to such. They must think me very anxious to be married. Thank Heaven my single state causes me no regrets."

The maiden contented herself with such notions until advancing age made her step down from her pedestal. Good-by then to all suitors. One year passed and then another. Her anxiety increased, and after anger came grief. She felt that those little smiles and glances which, at the bidding of

love, lurk in the countenances of fair maidens were day by day deserting her. Finally, when love himself departed, her features gave pleasure to none. Then she had recourse to those hundred little tricks of the toilet to repair the ravages of time; but nothing that she could do arrested the depredations of that despicable thief. One may repair a house gone to ruin: but the same thing is not possible with a face!

Her refined ladyship now sang to a different tune, for her mirror advised her to take a husband without delay. Perhaps also her heart harbored the wish. Even superior persons may have longings! This one at last made a choice that people would at one time have thought impossible; for she was very pleased and happy in marrying an ugly cripple.

THE WISHES

WHEN the Great Mogul held empire, there were certain little sprites who used to undertake all sorts of tasks helpful to mankind. They would do housework, stable-work, and even gardening. But if one interfered with them, all would be spoiled.

One of these friendly sprites cultivated the garden of a worthy family living near the Ganges. His duties were performed deftly and noiselessly. He loved not only his master and mistress, but the garden also. Possibly the zephyrs, who are said to be friends of the sprites, helped him in his tasks. At any rate he did his very best, and never ceased in his efforts to load his hosts with every pleasure. To prove his zeal he would have stayed with these people for ever, in spite of the natural propensity of his kind for waywardness. But his mischievous fellow-sprites fell to plotting. They induced the chief of their band to remove him to another field of labor. This the chief promised and, either by caprice or by policy, finally brought about. Orders came that the devoted worker should set out for the uttermost part of Norway, there to take charge of a house which at all times of the year was covered with snow. So from being an Indian, the poor thing became a Laplander.

"I am forced to leave you," he said to his hosts, "but for what fault of mine this has come to pass I cannot tell. I only know that go I must, and in a very little while too; a month

perhaps, or maybe only a week. Make the most of the interval. Fortunately, I can fulfil three wishes for you; but not more than three."

To mankind there is nothing very out-of-the-way in merely wishing. These good people decided that their first wish should be for abundance, and straightway Abundance, by the double-handful, poured gold into their coffers; wheat into their granaries; wine into their cellars. Repletion was everywhere. But, alas, what cares of direction, what keeping of accounts; what time and anxiety this affluence involved!

Thieves plotted against them. Great lords borrowed from them. The prince taxed them. They were, in fact, reduced to misery by this excess of good fortune. At last they could endure it no longer. "Take back this awful wealth," they cried. "Even the poor are happy in comparison with us, and poverty is more to be coveted than such riches. Away with these treasures! And thou, sweet Moderation, mother of all peace, sister of repose, come to us again!" With these words, which made their second wish, lo! Moderation returned and they received her with open arms, once again enjoying peace.

Thus at the end of these two wishes they were exactly where they were in the first place, and so it is with all who are given to wishing, and wasting in dreams the time they had better have spent in doing. But being philosophical people they laughed, and the sprite laughed with them. To profit by his generosity when he had left them, they hazarded their third wish and asked for wisdom. Wisdom is a treasure which never embarrasses.

THE DAIRY-WOMAN AND THE PAIL OF MILK

A YOUNG country woman named Perrette set out one morning from her little farm with a pail of milk, which she cleverly balanced upon her head over a pad or cushion. She hurried with sprightly steps to the market town, and so that she might be the less encumbered, wore a skirt that was short and light and shoes low and easy. As she went, her thoughts ran upon the price to be gained for her milk, and she schemed a way to lay out the sum in the purchase of one hundred eggs. She was sure that with care and diligence these would yield three broods.

"It would be quite easy for me," she said, "to raise the chicks near the house. The fox would be clever who would not leave me enough to buy one pig. A pig would fatten at the cost of a little bran, and when he had grown a fair size I should make a bargain of him for a good round sum. And then, considering the price he will fetch, what is to prevent my putting into our stable a cow and a calf? I can fancy how the calf will frisk about among the sheep!"

Thereupon Perrette herself frisked for joy, transported with the picture of her affluence. Over toppled the milk! Good-bye to calf and cow and pig and broods! This lady of wealth had to leave, with tearful eyes, her dissipated fortunes, and go straight to her husband framing excuses to avoid a beating.

The farce became known to the whole countryside, and

people called Perrette by the name of "Milkpail" ever after.

Who has never talked wildly? Who has never built castles in Spain? Wise men as well as milkmaids; sages and fools, all have waking dreams and find them sweet! Our senses are carried away by some flattering falsehood, and then wealth, honors, and beauty seem ours to command.

Alone with my thoughts I challenge the bravest. I dethrone monarchs and the people rejoicing crown me instead, showering diadems upon my head. Then lo! a little accident happens to bring me back to my senses, and I am Poor Jack as before.

THE PRIEST AND THE CORPSE

THERE was a funeral. The dead body was going sadly towards its last resting place; and following, rather gladly, was the priest who meant to bury it as soon as possible.

The dead man, in a leaden coffin, was borne in a coach, and was properly shrouded in the robe the dead always wear be it summer or winter. As for the priest, he sat near it, intoning as hard as he could all sorts of orisons, psalms, lessons, verses, and responses, in the hope that the more he gave the more would be paid for. "Leave it to me, Mr. Deadman," his actions seemed to say, "I'll give you a nice selection; a little of everything. It's only a matter of fees, you know."

And the Rev. John Crow kept his eye on his silent charge as if he expected some one would make off with it. "Mr. Deadman," his looks proclaimed, "by you I shall receive so and so much in money, so and so much in wax candles, and, possibly, a little more in incidental profits."

On the strength of these calculations he promised himself a quarter-cask of the best wine the neighborhood could offer. Beyond that he settled that a certain very attractive niece of his, as well as his housekeeper Paquette, should both have new dresses.

Whilst these pleasant and generous thoughts were running in his mind there came a terrific shock. The car overturned.

THE PRIEST AND THE CORPSE

The Rev. John Crow's head was broken by the coffin which fell upon him. Alas for the poor priest! he went to heaven with the parishioner he thought only to bury.

In reality, life over and over again is nothing but the fate of the Rev. John Crow who counted on his dead, and of Perrette who counted on her chickens.

THE MAN WHO RAN AFTER FORTUNE AND THE MAN WHO WAITED FOR HER IN HIS BED

WHO does not run after Fortune? I would I were in some place where I could watch the eager crowds rushing from kingdom to kingdom in their vain chase after the daughter of Chance!

They are indeed but faithful followers of a phantom; for when they think they have her, she is gone! Poor wretches! One must pity rather than blame their foolishness. "That man," they say with sanguine voice, "raised cabbages; and now he is Pope! Are we not as good as he?"

Ah! yes! a hundred times as good perhaps; but what of that? Fortune has no eyes for all your merit. Besides, is Papacy, after all, worth peace, which one must leave behind for it? Peace — a treasure that once was the possession of gods alone — is seldom granted to the votaries of Dame Fortune. Do not seek her; and then she will seek you. That is the way with women!

There once were two friends, who lived comfortably and prospered moderately in a village; but one of them was always wishing to do better. One day he said to the other, "Suppose we left this place and tried our luck elsewhere? You know that a prophet is never received in his own country!"

"You try, by all means," returned his friend, "but as for me, I am contented where I am. I desire neither better climate nor better possibilities. You please yourself. Follow

your unquiet spirit. You'll soon return, and I shall sleep soundly enough awaiting you."

So the man of ambition, or the money-grubber, whichever you like to call him, took to the road, and arrived next day at a place where, if anywhere, Dame Fortune should be found, namely, the court. He stayed at court for some long time, never missing an opportunity to put himself in the way of favors. He was in evidence when the king went to bed, when he arose, and on all other propitious occasions.

"What's amiss?" he said at last. "Fortune, I am convinced, dwells here; for I have seen her the guest now of this one and now of that one. How is it that I cannot entertain the capricious creature? I must try her elsewhere. I have already been told that the people of this place are exceedingly ambitious. Evidently there is no room for me here. So, good-bye! gentleman of the court, and follow to the bitter end this will-o'-the-wisp! They tell me that Dame Fortune has temples in Surat. Very well! We will go there."

He embarked at once. What hearts of bronze mankind has! The man who first attempted this awful route and defied its terrors must have had a heart of adamant. Often did our traveller turn his eyes towards his little home as first pirates, then contrary winds, then calms, then rocks in turn assailed him. Strange it is that men should take such pains to meet death, since it will come only too quickly to them in their homes!

Our adventurer arrived in India. There they told him that Japan was the place where Fortune dispensed her favors. He hurried there. The sea wearied of carrying him about. In the

end all the profit his long voyages brought him was the lesson which he learnt from savages, and that was: "Stay in your own country and let Nature instruct you." Japan, India, or anywhere else; no one place was better than another as a hunting ground for Fortune; so the conclusion was forced upon him that he had been wiser had he stayed in his own village. At last he renounced all wanderings and returned to his own country; and as he caught sight of his home from afar he wept for joy, and cried: "Happy is the man who, staying in his home, finds constant occupation in adjusting his desires to his surroundings. To him the court, the sea, and the land of Fortune are but hearsay. Thou, fickle Dame, flaunting before our eyes dignities and wealth, dost cause us to follow after these allurements to the ends of the earth, only to find them empty shams. Henceforth I wander no more, for here at home a hundred times more success shall I find."

Having registered this vow against Fortune the wanderer came to the door of his friend. There sat Fortune, waiting on the threshold, whilst his friend slumbered within.

AN ANIMAL IN THE MOON

WHILE one philosopher tells us that men are constantly the dupes of their own senses, another will swear that the senses never deceive. Both are right. Philosophy truly affirms that the senses will deceive so long as men are content to take upon trust the evidence the senses bring. But if this evidence is weighed, measured, and tested by every available resource of science the senses can deceive no one.

Not long ago, when a large telescope was levelled to observe the moon, the observer was astounded to see what he took to be some new animal in this lovely planet. Everybody was excited about the marvellous appearance. Something had occurred up above there which, without doubt, must mean great changes of some sort. Who could tell but that all the dreadful wars that were convulsing Europe had not been caused by it? The king, who patronised the sciences, hastened to the observatory to see the sight, and see it he did. There was the monster right enough!

And what was it after all? — Nothing but a poor little mouse that had by some unlucky chance got in between the lenses of the telescope. Here was the cause of all the devastating wars! Everybody laughed.

THE FORTUNE-TELLERS

REPUTATIONS may be made by the merest chances, and yet reputations control the fashions. Everywhere around one sees prejudices, scheming, and obtuseness; but little or no justice. Nothing can be done to stem this torrent of evil. It must run its course. It always has been and always will be.

A woman in Paris once made it her profession to tell fortunes. She became very popular and had great success. Did anybody lose anything; had any one a sweetheart; had any wife a husband she was tired of; any husband a jealous wife, to the prophetess such would run simply to be told the thing that it was comforting to hear.

The stock-in-trade of this fortune-teller consisted merely of a convincing manner, a few words of scientific jargon, a great deal of impudence, and much good luck. All these things together so impressed the people that as often as not they would cry, "Miraculous!" In short, although the woman's ignorance was very great she passed for a real oracle.

Notwithstanding the fact that this oracle only lived in a garret, she found so many ready to pay her well for her shams that she soon grew rich enough to improve the position of her husband, to rent an office, and buy a house.

The empty garret was soon tenanted by another woman to whom all the town — women, girls, valets, fine gentlemen — everybody in fact swarmed, as before, to consult their

destiny. The former tenant had built up such a reputation that the garret was still a sibyl's den, in spite of the fact that quite a different creature dwelt in it.

"I tell fortunes? Surely you're joking! Why, I cannot read, and as for writing, I never learnt more than to make my mark." But these disclaimers were useless. People insisted on having their fortunes told, and she had to do it. In consequence, she put by plenty of money, being able to earn, in spite of herself, quite as much as two lawyers could. The poverty of her home was a help rather than a hindrance. Four broken chairs and a broom-handle savored of a witch's frolic.

If this woman had told the truth in a room well-furnished she would have been scorned. The fashion for a garret had set in, and garret it must be.

In her new chambers the first fortune-teller waited in vain; for it was the outward sign alone that brought customers, and the sign was poverty.

THE COBBLER AND THE FINANCIER

THERE was once a cobbler who was so light hearted that he sang from morning to night. It was wonderful to watch him at his work, and more wonderful still to hear his runs and trills. He was in fact happier than the Seven Sages.

This merry soul had a neighbor who was exactly opposite. He sang little and slept less; for he was a financier, and made of money, as they say. Whenever it happened that after a sleepless night he would doze off in the early morning, the cobbler, who was always up betimes, would wake him up again with his joyful songs.

"Ha!" thought the man of wealth, "what a misfortune it is that one cannot buy sleep in the open market as one buys food and drink!" Then an idea came to him. He invited the cobbler to his house, where he asked him questions.

"Tell me, Master Gregory, what do you suppose your earnings amount to in a year?"

"In a year," laughed the cobbler, "that's more than I know. I never keep accounts that way, nor even keep one day from another. So long as I can make both ends meet, that's good enough for me!"

"Really!" replied the financier. "But what can you earn in one day?"

"Oh, sometimes more and sometimes less. The mischief of it is that there are so many feast days and high days and

fast days crowded into the year, on which, as the priest tells us, it is wicked to work at all; and worse still he keeps on finding some new saint or other to give weight to his sermons. If it were not for that, cobbling would be a fine paying game."

At this the wealthy man laughed. "Look here, my friend, today I'll lift you to the seats of the mighty! Here is a hundred pounds. Keep them and use them with care."

When the cobbler held the bag of money in his hand he imagined that it must be as much as would be coined in a hundred years.

Returning home he buried the bag in his cellar. He buried his joy with it, for there were no more songs. From the moment he came into possession of this wealth, the love of which is the root of all evil, his voice left him, and not only his voice, but his sleep also. And in place of these came anxiety, suspicion, and alarms; guests which stayed with him constantly. All day he kept his eye on the cellar door. Did a cat make a noise in the night, then surely that cat was after his money.

At last, in despair, the wretched cobbler ran to the financier whom he now no longer kept awake. "Oh, give me back my joy in life, my songs, my sleep; and take your hundred pounds again."

THE POWER OF FABLE

IN the old, vain, and fickle city of Athens, an orator, seeing how the light-hearted citizens were blind to certain dangers which threatened the state, presented himself before the tribune, and there sought, by the very tyranny of his forceful eloquence, to move the heart of the republic towards a sense of the common welfare.

But the people neither heard nor heeded. Then the orator had recourse to more urgent and stronger arguments, metaphors, powerful enough to touch hearts of stone. He spoke in thunders that might have raised the dead; but his words were carried away on the wind. The people did not deign to hear the launching of these thunderbolts. They were engrossed in something quite different. A fight between two urchins was what the crowd found so engaging; not the orator's warnings.

What then did the speaker do? He tried another plan. "Ceres," he began, "made a voyage one day with an eel and a swallow. After a time the three travellers were stopped by a river. This the eel got over by swimming and the swallow by flying —"

"Well! what about Ceres? What did she do?" cried the crowd with one voice.

"She did what she did!" retorted the speaker in anger. "But first she raged against you. What! Does it take a child's story to open your ears, you who should be eager for any news of the peril that menaces; you, the only state in

Greece that takes no heed? You ask what Ceres did. Why do you not ask what Philip does?"

At this reproach the assembly was stirred. A mere fable brought them open-eared to all the orator would say.

THE DOG WHO CARRIED HIS MASTER'S DINNER

A DOG who had been taught to carry to his master the noon meal was one day trotting along with the burden slung around his neck. He was tempted to take a taste himself; but knew that it would be wrong to do so, and being a temperate, self-governed dog he refrained. We of the human race allow ourselves to be tempted by things often enough; but, strange as it is, there seems to be more difficulty in teaching mankind to resist temptation than there is in teaching dogs to do so.

On this particular day the dog was met by a mastiff who at once wanted the dinner, but did not find it so easy to capture as he thought; for our dog put it down and stood guard over it. There was a mighty fight. Soon others arrived; curs that were used to knocks and kicks while picking up a living in the streets. Seeing that he should be badly overmatched, and that his master's dinner was in danger of being devoured by the crowd, he bethought himself how he too might have his share, if shared it must be. So he very wisely exclaimed, "No fighting, gentlemen, my share will suffice me. Do as you please with the rest." With these words he snapped up a portion, upon which all the rest began to pull and jostle and feasted merrily.

THYRSIS AND AMARANTH

A SHEPHERD deeply in love with a shepherdess was sitting one day by her side trying to find words to express the emotions her charms created in his breast.

"Ah! Amaranth, dear," he sighed, "could you but feel, as I do, a certain pain which, whilst it tears the heart, is so delightful that it enchants, you would say that nothing under heaven is its equal. Let me tell you of it. Believe me, trust me. Would I deceive you? You, for whom I am filled with the tenderest sentiments the heart can feel!"

"And what, my Thyrsis, is the name you give this pleasing pain?"

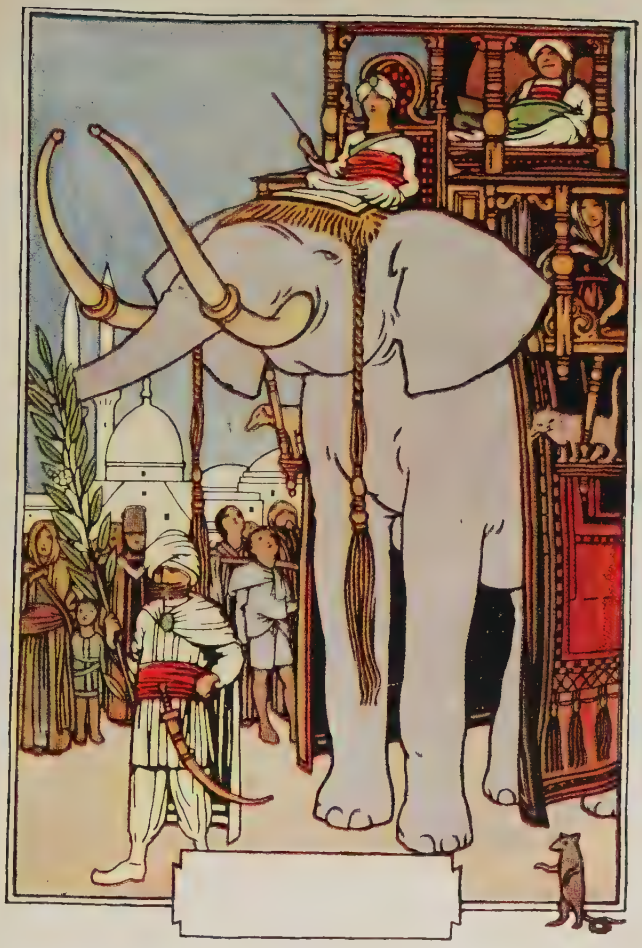
"It is called love," said Thyrsis.

"Ah!" responded the maiden, "that is a beautiful name. Tell me by what signs I may know it, if it come to me. What are the feelings it gives one?"

Thyrsis, taking heart of grace, replied with much ardor: "One feels an anguish beside which the joys of kings are but dull and insipid. One forgets oneself, and takes pleasure in the solitudes of the woods. To glance into a brook is to see, not oneself, but an ever-haunting image. To any other form one's eyes are blind. It may be that there is a shepherd in the village at whose voice, at the mention of whose name, you will blush; at the thought of whom you will sigh. Why, one knows not! To see him will be a burning desire, and yet you would shrink from him."

"Oho!" said Amaranth. "Is this then the pain you have preached so much! It is hardly new to me. I seem to know something of it." The heart of Thyrsis leapt, for he thought that at last he had gained his end; when the fair one added, "'Tis just in this way that I feel for Cladimant!"

Imagine the vexation and misery of poor Thyrsis!



THE RAT AND THE ELEPHANT

AN exceedingly small rat was watching a big elephant and sneering at the slowness of his steps.

The enormous animal was heavily laden. On his back rose a three-storied howdah, in which were a celebrated sultana, her dog, her cat, her monkey, her parrot, her old servant, and all her household. They were going upon a pilgrimage.

The rat wondered why all the people should express astonishment at seeing this enormous bulk — "As if the fact of occupying more or less space implied that one was the more or less important accordingly! What is it you admire in him, you men? If it is only the weight of his body which fills the children with terror, then we rats, small as we are, consider ourselves not one grain less than the elephant." He would have said more; but the cat, bounding out of her cage, let him see in an instant that a rat is not an elephant.

THE HOROSCOPE

A FATHER had an only son whom he loved exceedingly. His affection caused him to be so anxious as to the boy's welfare that he sought to learn from astrologers and fortune-tellers what fate was in store for the son and heir. One of these soothsayers told him that an especial danger lay with lions, from which the youth must be guarded until the age of twenty was reached, but not after. The father, to make sure of this precaution, upon the issue of which depended the life of his loved one, commanded that by no chance should the boy ever be permitted to go beyond the threshold of the house. Ample provision was made for the satisfaction of all the wishes proper to youth in the way of play with his companions, jumping, running, walking, and so forth. As the age approached when the spirits of youth yearn for the chase, he was taught to abhor that sport.

But temperament cannot be changed by persuasion and counsel, nor by enlightenment. The young man, eager, ardent, and full of courage, no sooner felt the promptings of his years than he sighed for the forbidden pleasures. The greater the hindrance the stronger the desire. Knowing the reason of his restrictions, and seeing day by day in his palatial home the hunting scenes pictured in paint and tapestry on every wall, his excitement became unrestrained.

Once his eye fell upon a pictured lion. "Oh! Monster!" he exclaimed in a transport of indignation. "It is to you that

the shade and fetters in which I live are due!" With that he struck the lion a heavy blow with his fist. Hidden under the tapestry a great nail offered its cruel point to his hand. The wound grew beyond the reach of medical skill, and in the end this life, so guarded and cherished, was lost by means of the very care taken to preserve it.

The same jealous precaution proved fatal to the poet Æschylus. It is said that some fortune-teller threatened him with the fall of a house as his doom, upon which he at once left the town and made his bed in the open fields, far from roofs and beneath the sky. But an eagle flew by overhead carrying in its talons a tortoise, and seeing the bald head of the poet beneath, which it mistook for a stone, the bird let fall its prey in order to break the shell of the tortoise. Thus were the days of poor Æschylus ended.

JUPITER AND THE THUNDERBOLTS

ONE day, as Jupiter seated on high looked down upon the world, he was incensed at the faults committed by mankind. "Let us," he said, "have some other occupants in the regions of the universe in place of these present inhabitants who importune and weary me. Go you to Hades, Mercury, and bring hither the cruellest of the furies. This time, O race that I have too tenderly nurtured, you shall perish."

After this outburst the temper of the god began to cool.

Mercury, light of wing and sweet of tongue, descended to the abode of the dread sisters Tisiphone, Megæra, and Alecto, and his choice fell upon the latter, the pitiless one. She, feeling proud of the preference, grew so arrogant as to swear by Pluto that the whole of the human brood should soon people his domains. But Jupiter did not approve of the vow this member of the Eumenides had sworn, and he sent her back to Hades. At the same time he launched a thunderbolt upon one particularly perfidious race of men. This, however, being hurled by a father's arm, mercifully fell in a desert, causing less ruin than alarm. What followed from this was simply that the wicked brood took heart at such indulgence and did not trouble to mend their ways. Then all the gods in Olympus complained, until he who controls the clouds swore by the Styx that further storms should be sent and that they should not fail as the other had.

The Olympians only smiled at this. They told Jupiter that as he was the father it would be better if he left in other hands the making of thunderbolts. Vulcan undertook the task. Soon his furnaces glowed with bolts of two kinds; one that hits its mark with a deadly unerring — and that is the sort which any of the Olympian gods will hurl; whilst the other sort was that which becomes scattered on its course and does damage only to the mountain tops, or perchance is even lost on the way. It is this kind of thunderbolt that Jupiter sends. His fatherly heart permits him to use no other.

EDUCATION

ONCE upon a time there were two dogs, one named Lurcher and the other Cæsar. They were brothers; handsome, well-built, and plucky, and descended from dogs who were famous in their day. These two brothers, falling into the hands of different masters, found their destinies likewise in different spheres; for whilst one haunted the forests, the other lurched about a kitchen.

The names to which they now answered were not, however, the names that were first given them. The influence of each one's career upon his nature brought about a new name and a new reputation; for Cæsar's nature was improved and strengthened by the life he led, whilst Lurcher's was made more and more despicable by a degraded existence. A scullion named him Lurcher; but the other dog received his noble name on account of his life of high adventure. He had held many a stag at bay, killed many a hare, and otherwise risen to the position of a Cæsar among dogs. Care was taken that he should not mate indiscriminately, so that his descendants' blood should not degenerate. On the other hand, poor Lurcher bestowed his affections wherever he would and his brood became populous. He was the progenitor of all turn-spits in France; a variety which became common enough to form at last a race in themselves. They show more readiness to flee than to attack, and are the very antipodes of the Cæsars.

DEMOCRITUS AND THE PEOPLE OF ABDERA

I HAVE always hated the opinions of the mob. A mob seems profane, unjust, and rash, putting false construction on all things, and judging every matter by a mob-made standard.

Democritus had experience of this. His countrymen thought him mad. Little minds! But then, no one is a prophet in his own country! The people themselves were mad, of course, and Democritus was the wise man. Nevertheless the error went so far that the city of Abdera sent a messenger to the great physician Hippocrates, requesting him both by letter and by spoken word to come and restore the sage's reason.

"Our citizen," said the spokesman with tears in his eyes, "has lost his wits, alas! Study has corrupted Democritus. If he were less wise we should esteem him much more. He will have it that there is no limit to the number of worlds like ours and that possibly they are inhabited with numberless Democrituses. Not satisfied with these wild dreams, he talks also of atoms — phantoms born only in his own empty brain. Then, measuring the very heavens, though he remains here below to do it, he claims to know the universe; yet admits that he does not know himself. Time was when he could control debates, now he mutters only to himself. So come, thou divine mortal, for the patient's case is a bad one."

Hippocrates, though he had little faith in these people,

went nevertheless. Now mark, I beg of you, what strange meetings fate may bring about in this life! Hippocrates arrived just at the time when this man, who was supposed to have neither sense nor reason, happened to be searching into a question as to whether this very reason was seated in the heart or in the head of men and beasts.

Sitting in leafy shade, beside a brook, and with many a volume at his feet, he was occupied wholly with a study of the convolutions of the brain; and thus absorbed, as his manner was, he scarcely noticed the advance of his friend the learned physician. Their greeting was soon over as you may imagine, for the sage is at all times chary of time and speech. So having put aside mere trifles of conversation, they reasoned upon man and his mind, and next fell to talking upon ethics.

It is not necessary that I should here enlarge upon what each had to say to the other on these matters.

THE ACORN AND THE PUMPKIN

A VILLAGER was once struck with the largeness of a pumpkin and the thinness of the stem upon which it grew. "What could the Almighty have been thinking about?" he cried. "He has certainly chosen a bad place for a pumpkin to grow. Now I would have hung it on one of these oaks. That would have been just as it should be. Like fruit, like tree! What a pity," said he, addressing himself, "that you were not on the spot to give advice at the Creation which the parson preaches about. Everything would have been properly done then. For instance; wouldn't this acorn, no bigger than my little finger, be better hanging on this frail stem? The Almighty has blundered there surely! The more I think about these fruits and their situations, the more it seems to me that it is all a mistake."

Becoming worried by so much reflection our man cast himself under an oak saying, "A man can't sleep when he has so much brain." Then he at once dropped off into a nap.

Presently an acorn fell plump upon his nose. Starting from sleep, he put his hand up to see what had happened and found the acorn caught in his beard, whilst his nose began to pain and bleed. "Oh, oh!" he cried, "I am bleeding. How would it have been if a heavier mass than this had fallen from the tree: if this acorn had been a pumpkin? The Almighty did not intend that, I see. Doubtless he was right. I understand the reason why perfectly now."

THE SCHOOLBOY, THE PEDANT, AND THE OWNER OF A GARDEN

A YOUNGSTER, who was doubly foolish and doubly a rogue, was given, they say, to robbing a neighbor's garden of its fruit and flowers. This may have been because he was too young to know better, and perhaps because teachers do not always mould the minds of young people in the right way.

The owner of the garden boasted in each season the very best of what was due. In spring he could show the most delightful blossoms and in autumn the very pick of all the apples.

One day he espied this schoolboy carelessly climbing a fruit tree and knocking off the buds, those sweet and fragile forerunners of promised fruit in abundance. The urchin even broke off a bough, and did so much other damage that the owner sent a message of complaint to the boy's schoolmaster. This worthy soon appeared, and behind him a tribe of the scholars, who swarmed into the orchard and began behaving worse than the first one. The schoolmaster's plan in thus aggravating the injury was really to make an opportunity for delivering them all a good lesson, which they should remember all their lives. He quoted Virgil and Cicero; he made many scientific allusions and ran his discourse to such a length that the little wretches were able to get all over the garden and despoil it in a hundred places.

THE SCULPTOR AND THE STATUE OF JUPITER

ONCE a sculptor who saw for sale a block of marble was so struck with its beauty that he could not resist the temptation to buy it. When it was in his studio he thought to himself, "Now what shall my chisel make of it? Shall it be a god, a table, or a basin? It shall be a god. And I, myself, shall ordain that the god shall poise a thunderbolt in his hand. So tremble, mortals, and worship! Behold the lord of the earth!"

The artist set to work and expressed so powerfully the attributes of the god that those who saw it averred that it only lacked speech to be Jupiter himself. It is said that the sculptor had scarcely completed the statue when he became so overawed as to fear and tremble before the work of his own hands.

The poet of old, likewise, greatly dreaded the hate and the wrath of the gods he himself created: a weakness which left little to choose between him and the sculptor.

THE OYSTER AND THE PLEADERS

ONE day two pilgrims espied upon the sands of the shore an oyster that had been thrown up by the tide. They devoured it with their eyes whilst pointing at it with their fingers; but whose teeth should deal with it was a matter of dispute.

When one stopped to pick up the prey the other pushed him away saying: "It would be just as well first to decide which of us is to have the pleasure of it. He who first saw it should swallow it, and let the other watch him eat."

"If you settle the affair that way," replied his companion, "I have good eyes, thank God."

"But my sight is not bad either," said the other, "and I saw it before you did, and that I'll stake my life upon."

"Well, suppose you did see it, I smelt it."

During this lively interlude Justice Nincompoop arrived on the scene, and to him they appealed to judge their claims. The justice very gravely took the oyster, opened it, and put it into his mouth, whilst the two claimants looked on. Having deliberately swallowed the oyster, the justice, in the portentous tones of a Lord Chief Justice, said, "The court here awards each of you a shell, without costs. Let each go home peaceably."

THE CAT AND THE FOX

THE cat and the fox, in the manner of good little saints, started out upon a pilgrimage. They were both humbugs, arch-hypocrites, two downright highwaymen, who for the expenses of their journey indemnified themselves by seeing who could devour the most fowls and gobble the most cheese.

The way was long and therefore wearisome, so they shortened it by arguing. Argumentation is a great help. Without it one would go to sleep. Our pilgrims shouted themselves hoarse. Then having argued themselves out, they talked of other things.

At length the fox said to the cat, "You pretend that you're very clever. Do you know as much as I? I have a hundred ruses up my sleeve."

"No," answered the cat, "I have but one; but that is always ready to hand, and I maintain that it is worth a thousand other dodges."

Then they fell again to disputing one against the other on each side of the question, the whys and the wherefores, raising their voices higher and higher. Presently the sudden appearance of a pack of hounds stopped their noise.

The cat said to the fox, "Now, my friend, ransack that cunning brain of yours for one of your thousand ruses. Fetch down from your sleeve one of those certain stratagems. As

for me, this is my dodge." So saying, he bounded to a tall tree and climbed to its top with alacrity.

The fox tried a hundred futile doublings; ran into a hundred holes; put the hounds at fault a hundred times; tried everywhere to find a safe place of retreat, but everywhere failed between being smoked out of one and driven out of another by the hounds. Finally, as he came out of a hole two nimble dogs set upon him and strangled him at the first grip.

THE MONKEY AND THE CAT

BERTRAND was a monkey and Ratter was a cat. They shared the same house and had the same master, and a mischievous pair they were. It was impossible to scare them. If anything was missed or spoiled, no one thought of blaming the other people in the house. Bertrand stole all he could lay his hands upon, and as for Ratter, he gave more attention to cheese than he did to the mice.

One day, in the chimney corner, these two rascals sat watching some chestnuts that were roasting before the fire. How jolly it would be to steal them they thought: doubly desirable, for it would not only be joy to themselves, but an annoyance to others.

"Brother," said Bertrand to Ratter, "this day you shall achieve your master-stroke: you shall snatch some chestnuts out of the fire for me. Providence has not fitted me for that sort of game. If it had, I assure you chestnuts would have a fine time."

No sooner said than done. Ratter delicately stirred the cinders with his paw, stretched out his claws two or three times to prepare for the stroke, and then adroitly whipped out first one, then two, then three of the chestnuts, whilst Bertrand crunched them up between his teeth. In came a servant, and there was an end of the business. Farewell, ye rogues! I am told that Ratter was by no means satisfied with the affair.

THE DOG WITH HIS EARS CROPPED

WHAT have I done to be treated in this way? Mutilated by my own master! A nice state to be in! Dare I present myself before other dogs? O ye kings over the animals, or rather tyrants of them, would any creature do the same to you?"

Such were the lamentations of poor Fido, a young house-dog, whilst those who were busy cropping his ears remained quite untouched by his piercing and dolorous howls.

Fido believed himself to be ruined for life; but he very shortly found that he was a gainer by the maiming. For being by nature disposed to pilfer from his companions, it would come within his experience to have many misadventures wherein his ears would be torn in a hundred places.

Aggressive dogs always have ragged ears. The less they have for other dogs' teeth to fasten upon the better.

When one has but a single weak place to defend, one protects it against an onset. Witness Master Fido armed with a spiked collar, and having no more ears to catch hold of than are on my hand. Even a wolf would not have known where to take him.

THE LIONESS AND THE SHE-BEAR

A LIONESS had lost one of her cubs. A hunter had made away with it, and the poor mother roared out her wailings to such an extent that all the inhabitants of the forest were seriously disturbed. The spells of the night, its darkness and its silence, were powerless to hush the tumult of the queen of the forest. Sleep was driven from every animal within hearing.

At last the she-bear rose up and coming to the wailing lioness said, "Good Madam, just one word with you. All those little ones that have passed between your teeth, had they neither fathers nor mothers?"

"To be sure they had."

"Then if that be so, and as none have come to mourn their dead in cries which would split our heads: if so many mothers have borne their loss silently, why cannot you be silent also?"

"I? I be silent? Unhappy I? Ah! I have lost my son! There is nought for me but to drag out a miserable old age."

"But pray tell me what obliges you to do so."

"Alas! Destiny. It is Destiny that hates me."

Those are the words that are for ever in the mouths of us all.

Unhappy human kind let this address itself to you. I hear nothing but the echoing murmur of trifling complaints. Whoever, in like case, believes himself the hated of the gods, let him consider Hecuba, and he will render thanks for their clemency.

THE RABBITS

WHEN I have noticed how man acts at times, and how, in a thousand ways, he comports himself just as the lower animals do, I have often said to myself that the lord of these lower orders has no fewer faults than his subjects.

Nature has allowed every living thing a drop or two from the fount at which the spirits of all creatures imbibe.

I will prove what I say.

If at the hour when night has scarcely passed and day hardly begun I climb into a tree, on the edge of some wood, and, like a new Jupiter from the heights of Olympus, I send a shot at some unsuspecting rabbit, then the whole colony of rabbits, who were enjoying their thyme-scented meal with open eyes and listening ears upon the heath, immediately scamper away. The report sends them all to seek refuge in their subterranean city.

But their great fright is soon over; the danger quickly forgotten. Again I see the rabbits more light-hearted than ever coming close under my death-dealing hand.

Does not this give us a picture of mankind? Dispersed by some storm, men no sooner reach a haven than they are ready again to risk the same winds and the same distress. True rabbits, they run again into the death-dealing hands of fortune.

Let us add to this example another of a more ordinary kind.

When strange dogs pass through any spot beyond their customary route there is a grand to-do. I leave you to picture it. All the dogs of the district with one idea in their heads join forces, barking and biting, to chase the intruder beyond the bounds of their territory.

So, it may be, a similar joint-interest in property or in glory and grandeur leads such people as the governors of states, certain favored courtiers, and people of a trade to behave exactly like these jealous dogs. All of us, as a rule, rob the chance-comer and tear him to pieces. Vain ladies and men of letters are usually so disposed. Woe betide the newly-arrived beauty or a new writer!

As few as possible fighting round the cake! That's the best way!

I could bring a hundred examples to bear upon this subject; but the shorter a discourse is the better. I take the masters of literature for my model in this and hold that in the best of themes something should be left unsaid for the reader to consider about. Therefore this discourse shall end.

THE GODS WISHING TO INSTRUCT A SON OF JUPITER

JUPITER had a son, who, sensible of his lofty origin, showed always a god-like spirit. Childhood is not much concerned with loving; yet to the childhood of this young god, loving and wishing to be loved was the chief concern. In him, love and reason which grow with years, outraced Time, that light-winged bearer of the seasons which come, alas! only too quickly.

Flora, with laughing looks and winning airs, was the first to touch the heart of the youthful Olympian. Everything that passion could inspire — delicate sentiments full of tenderness, tears, and sighs — all were there: he forgot nothing. As a son of Jupiter he would by right of birth be dowered with greater gifts than the sons of other gods; and it seemed as though all his behaviour were prompted by the reminiscence that he had indeed already been a lover in some former state, so well did he play the part.

Nevertheless, it was Jupiter's wish that the boy should be taught, and assembling the gods in council he said, "So far, I have never been at fault in the conduct of the universe which I have ruled unaided; but there are various charges which I now have decided to distribute amongst the younger gods. This beloved child of mine I have already counted upon. He is of my own blood and many an altar already flames in his

honor. Yet to merit his rank among the immortals it is necessary that he should possess all knowledge."

As the god of the thunders ceased the whole assembly applauded. As for the boy himself, he did not appear to be above the wish to learn everything.

"I undertake," said Mars, the god of war, "to teach him the art by which so many heroes have won the glories of Olympus and extended the empire."

"I will be his master in the art of the lyre," promised the fair and learned Apollo.

"And I," said Hercules with the lion's-skin, "will teach him how to overcome Vice and quell evil passions, those poisonous monsters which like Hydras are ever reborn in the heart. A foe to effeminate pleasures, he shall learn from me those too seldom trodden paths that lead to honor along the tracks of virtue."

When it came to Cupid, the god of love, to speak he simply said, "I can show him everything."

THE LION, THE MONKEY, AND THE TWO ASSES

KING LION, thinking that he would govern better if he took a few lessons in moral philosophy, had a monkey brought to him one fine day who was a master of arts in the monkey tribe. The first lesson he gave was as follows:

"Great King, in order to govern wisely, a prince should always consider the good of the country before yielding to that feeling which is commonly known as self-love, for that fault is the father of all the vices one sees in animals. To rid oneself of this sentiment is not an easy thing to do, and is not to be done in a day. Indeed, merely to moderate it is to achieve a good deal, and if you succeed so far you will never tolerate in yourself anything ridiculous or unjust."

"Give me," commanded the king, "an example of each of those faults."

"Every species of creature," continued the philosopher, "esteems itself in its heart above all the others. These others it regards as ignoramuses, calling them by many hard names which, after all, hurt nobody. At the same time this self-love which sneers at other tribes and other kinds of beasts, induces the individual to heap praise upon other individuals of his own species, because that is a very good way of praising oneself too. From this it is easy to see that many talents here below are in reality but empty pretence, assumption, and pose,

and a certain gift of making the most of oneself, better understood by ignorant people than by learned.

"The other day I followed two asses who were offering the incense of flattery to each other by turns, and heard one say, 'My lord, do you not think that man, that perfect animal, is both unjust and stupid? He profanes our august name by calling every one of his own kind an ass who is ignorant, or dull, or idiotic; and he calls our laughter and our discourse by the term "braying." It is very amusing that these human people pretend to excel us!'

"'My friend,' said his companion, 'it is for you to speak, and for them to hold their tongues. They are the true brayers. But let us speak no more of them. We two understand each other; that is sufficient. And as for the marvels of delight your divine voice lets fall upon our ears, the nightingale herself is but a novice in comparison. You surpass the court musician.'

"To this the other donkey replied, 'My lord, I admire in you exactly the same excellencies.'

"Not content with flattering each other in this way, these two asses went about the cities singing aloud each other's praises. Either one thought he was doing a good turn to himself in thus lauding his companion.

"Well, your majesty, I know of many people today, not among asses, but among exalted creatures, whom heaven has been pleased to raise to a high degree, who would, if they dared, change their title of 'Excellency' to that of 'Majesty.' I am saying more than I should, perhaps, and I hope your majesty will keep the secret. You wished to hear of some incident which would show you, among other things, how self-love

makes people ridiculous, and there I have given you a good instance. Injustice I will speak of another time, it would take too long now."

Thus spoke the ape. No one has ever been able to tell me whether he ever did speak of injustice to his king. It would have been a delicate matter, and our master of arts, who was no fool, regarded the lion as too terrible a king to submit to being lectured too far.

THE WOLF AND THE FOX IN THE WELL

WHY does Æsop give to the fox the reputation of excelling in all tricks of cunning? I have sought for a reason, but cannot find one. Does not the wolf, when he has need to defend his life or take that of another, display as much knowingness as the fox? I believe he knows more, and I dare, perhaps with some reason, to contradict my master in this particular.

Nevertheless, here is a case where undoubtedly all the honor fell to the dweller in burrows.

One evening a fox, who was as hungry as a dog, happened to see the round reflection of the moon in a well, and he believed it to be a fine cheese. There were two pails which alternately drew up the water. Into the uppermost of these the fox leapt, and his weight caused him to descend the well, where he at once discovered his mistake about the cheese. He became extremely worried and fancied his end approaching, for he could see no way to get up again but by some other hungry one, enticed by the same reflection, coming down in the same way that he had.

Two days passed without any one coming to the well. Time, which is always marching onward, had, during two nights, hollowed the outline of the silvery planet, and Reynard was in despair.

At last a wolf, parched with thirst, drew near, to whom the fox called from below, "Comrade, here is a treat for you!

Do you see this? It is an exquisite cheese made by Faunus from milk of the heifer Io. If Jupiter were ill and lost his appetite he would find it again by one taste of this. I have only eaten this piece out of it; the rest will be plenty for you. Come down in the pail up there. I put it there on purpose for you."

A rigmarole so cleverly told was easily believed by the fool of a wolf, who descended by his greater weight, which not only took him down, but brought the fox up.

THE MICE AND THE SCREECH-OWL

IT is not always wise to say to your company, "Just listen to this joke" or "What do you think of this for a marvel?" for one can never be sure that the listeners will regard the matter in the same way that the teller does. Yet here is a case that makes an exception to this good rule, and I maintain that it is in truth wonderful, and, although it has the appearance of being a fable, it is in reality absolute fact.

There was once an extremely old pine-tree which an owl, that grim bird which Atropus takes for her interpreter, had made to serve as his palace. But there were other tenants lodging in its cavernous and time-rotted trunk. These were mice, well fed, positive balls of fat, but not one of them had a foot. They had all been mutilated. The owl had nipped their feet off with his beak, whilst feeding and fostering them with wheat from neighboring stacks.

It must be confessed that this bird had reasoned.

Doubtless, in his time, when hunting mice, he had found that after bringing them home they escaped again from the trunk, and to prevent the recurrence of such a loss the artful rascal had thenceforth nipped off the feet of all he caught, keeping them prisoners and eating them one today and one tomorrow. To eat them all at once would have been impossible. He had his health to think of. His forethought, which went quite as far as ours, extended to bringing them grain for their subsistence

THE COMPANIONS OF ULYSSES

THAT great hero-wanderer Ulysses had been with his companions driven hither and thither at the will of the winds for ten years, never knowing what their ultimate fate was to be. At length they disembarked upon a shore where Circe, the daughter of Apollo, held her court. Receiving them she brewed a delicious but baneful liquor, which she made them drink. The result of this was that first they lost their reason, and a few moments after, their bodies took the forms and features of various animals; some unwieldy, some small. Ulysses alone, having the wisdom to withstand the temptation of the treacherous cup, escaped the metamorphosis. He, besides possessing wisdom, bore the look of a hero and had the gift of honeyed speech, so that it came about that the goddess herself imbibed a poison little different from her own; that is to say, she became enamoured of the hero and declared her love to him. Now was the time for Ulysses to profit by this turn of events, and he was too cunning to miss the opportunity, so he begged and obtained the boon that his friends should be restored to their natural shapes.

"But will they be willing to accept their own forms again?" asked the nymph. "Go to them and make them the offer."

Ulysses, glad and eager, ran to his Greeks and cried, "The poisoned cup has its remedy, and I come to offer it to you. Dear friends of mine, will you not be glad to have your manly forms again? Speak, for your speech is already restored."

The lion was the first to reply. Making an effort to roar he said, "I, for one, am not such a fool. What! renounce all the great advantages that have just been given me? I have teeth. I have claws. I can pull to pieces anything that attacks me. I am, in fact, a king. Do you think it would suit me to become a citizen of Ithaca once more? Who knows but that you might make of me a common soldier again. Thank you; but I will remain as I am."

Ulysses, in sad surprise, turned to the bear. "Ah, brother! what form is this you have taken, you who used to be so handsome?"

"Well, really! I like that!" said the bear in his way. "What form is this? you ask. Why it is the form that a bear should have. Pray who instructed you that one form is more handsome than another? Is it your business to judge between us? I prefer to appeal to the sight of the gentler sex in our ursine race. Do I displease you? Then pass on. Go your ways and leave me to mine. I am free and content as I am, and I tell you frankly and flatly that I will not change my state."

The princely Greek then turned to a wolf with the same proposals, and risking a similar rebuff said: "Comrade, it overwhelms me that a sweet young shepherdess should be driven to complain to the echoing crags of the gluttonous appetite that impelled you to devour her sheep. Time was when you would have protected her sheepfold. In those days you led an honest life. Leave your lairs and become, instead of a wolf, an honest man again."

"What is that?" answered the wolf. "I don't see your point. You come here treating me as though I were a carnivo-

rous beast. But what are you, who are talking in this strain? Would not you and yours have eaten these sheep, which all the village is deploring, if I had not? Now say, on your oath, do you really think I should have loved slaughter any less if I had remained a man? For a mere word, you men are at times ready to strangle each other. Are you not, therefore, as wolves one to another? All things considered, I maintain as a matter of fact that, rascal for rascal, it is better to be a wolf than a man. I decline to make any change in my condition."

In this way did Ulysses go from one to another making the same representations and receiving from all, large and small alike, the same refusals. Liberty, unbridled lust of appetite, the ambushes of the woods, all these things were their supreme delight. They all renounced the glory attaching to great deeds.

They thought that in following their passions they were enjoying freedom, not seeing that they were but slaves to themselves.

THE WOLF AND THE FOX

A FOX once remarked to a wolf, "Dear friend, do you know that the utmost I can get for my meals is a tough old cock or perchance a lean hen or two. It is a diet of which I am thoroughly weary. You, on the other hand, feed much better than that, and with far less danger. My foraging takes me close up to houses; but you keep far away. I beg of you, comrade, to teach me your trade. Let me be the first of my race to furnish my pot with a plump sheep, and you will not find me ungrateful."

"Very well," replied the obliging wolf. "I have a brother recently dead, suppose you go and get his skin and wear it." This the fox accordingly did and the wolf commenced to give him lessons. "You must do this and act so, when you wish to separate the dogs from the flocks." At first Reynard was a little awkward, but he rapidly improved, and with a little practice he reached at last the perfection of wolfish strategy. Just as he had learned all that there was to know a flock approached. The sham wolf ran after it spreading terror all around, even as Patroclus wearing the armour of Achilles spread alarm throughout camp and city, when mothers, wives, and old men hastened to the temples for protection. In this case, the bleating army made sure there must be quite fifty wolves after them, and fled, dog and shepherd with them, to the neighboring village, leaving only one sheep as a hostage.

This remaining sheep our thief instantly seized and was

making off with it. But he had not gone more than a few steps when a cock crew near by. At this signal, which habit of life had led him to regard as a warning of dawn and danger, he dropped his disguising wolfskin and, forgetting his sheep, his lesson, and his master, scampered off with a will.

Of what use is such shamming? It is an illusion to suppose that one is really changed by making the pretence. One resumes one's first nature upon the earliest occasion for hiding it.

THE FOREST AND THE WOOD-CUTTER

A WOOD-CUTTER had broken or lost the handle of his hatchet and found it not easy to get it repaired at once. During the time, therefore, that it was out of use, the woods enjoyed a respite from further damage. At last the man came humbly and begged of the forest to allow him gently to take just one branch wherewith to make him a new haft, and promised that then he would go elsewhere to ply his trade and get his living. That would leave unthreatened many an oak and many a fir that now won universal respect on account of its age and beauty.

The innocent forest acquiesced and furnished him with a new handle. This he fixed to his blade and, as soon as it was finished, fell at once upon the trees, despoiling his benefactress, the forest, of her most cherished ornaments. There was no end to her bewailings: her own gift had caused her grief.

Here you see the way of the world and of those who follow it. They use the benefit against the benefactors. I weary of talking about it. Yet who would not complain that sweet and shady spots should suffer such outrage. Alas! it is useless to cry out and be thought a nuisance: ingratitude and abuses will remain the fashion none the less.

THE FOX AND THE YOUNG TURKEYS

SOME young turkeys were lucky enough to find a tree which served them as a citadel against the assaults of a certain fox. He, one night, having made the round of the rampart and seen each turkey watching like a sentinel, exclaimed, "What! These people laugh at me, do they? And do they think that they alone are exempt from the common rule? No! by all the gods! no!"

He accomplished his design.

The moon shining brilliantly seemed to favor the turkey folk against the fox. But he was no novice in the laying of sieges, and had recourse to his bag of rascally tricks. He pretended to climb the tree; stood upon his hind legs; counterfeited death; then came to life again. Harlequin himself could not have acted so many parts. He reared his tail and made it gleam in the moonshine, and practised a hundred other pleasantries, during which no turkey could have dared to go to sleep. The enemy tired them out at last by keeping their eyes fixed upon him. The poor birds became dazed. One lost its balance and fell. Reynard put it by. Then another fell and was caught and laid on one side. Nearly half of them at length succumbed and were taken off to the fox's larder.

To concentrate too much attention upon a danger may cause us to tumble into it.

THE SCYTHIAN PHILOSOPHER

A CERTAIN austere philosopher of Scythia, wishing to follow a pleasant life, travelled through the land of the Greeks, and there he found in a quiet spot a sage, one such as Virgil has written of; a man the equal of kings, the peer almost of the gods, and like them content and tranquil. The happiness of this sage lay entirely in his beautiful garden. There the Scythian found him, pruning hook in hand, cutting away the useless wood from his fruit trees; lopping here, pruning there, trimming this and that, and everywhere aiding Nature, who repaid his care with usury.

"Why this wrecking?" asked the philosopher. "Is it wisdom thus to mutilate these poor dwellers in your garden? Drop that merciless tool, your pruning hook. Leave the work to the scythe of time. He will send them, soon enough, to the shores of the river of the departed."

"I am taking away the superfluous," answered the sage, "so that what is left may flourish the better."

The Scythian returned to his cheerless abode and, taking a bill-hook, cut and trimmed every hour in the day, advising his neighbors to do likewise and prescribing to his friends the means and methods. A universal cutting-down followed. The handsomest boughs were lopped; his orchard mutilated beyond all reason. The seasons were disregarded, and neither young moons nor old were noted. In the end everything languished and died.

THE ELEPHANT AND JUPITER'S APE

ONCE in the olden times the elephant and the rhinoceros disputed as to which was the more important, and which should, therefore, have empire over the other animals. They decided to settle the point by battle in an enclosed field.

The day was fixed, and all in readiness, when somebody came and informed them that Jupiter's ape, bearing a caduceus, had been seen in the air. The fact of his holding a caduceus proved him to be acting as official messenger from Olympus, and the elephant immediately took it for granted that the ape came as ambassador with greetings to his highness. Elated with this idea he waited for Gille, for that was the name of the ape, and thought him rather tardy in presenting his credentials. But at length Master Gille did salute his excellency as he passed, and the elephant prepared himself for the message. But not a word was forthcoming.

It was evident that the gods were not giving so much attention to these matters as the elephant supposed.

What does it matter to those in high places whether one is an elephant or a fly?

The would-be monarch was reduced to the necessity of opening the conversation himself. "My cousin Jupiter," he began, "will soon be able to watch a rather fine combat from his supreme throne, and his court will see some splendid sport."

"What combat?" asked the ape rather severely.

"What! Do you not know that the rhinoceros denies me precedence: that the Elephantidæ are at war with the Rhinocerotidæ? You surely know these families: they have some reputation."

"I am charmed to learn their names," replied Master Gille. "We are little concerned about such matters in our vast halls."

This shamed and surprised the elephant. "Eh! What, then, is the reason of your visit amongst us?"

"Oh, it was to divide a blade of grass between two ants. We care for all. As for your affair, nothing has been said about it in the council of the gods. The little and the great are equal in their eyes."

THE LEAGUE OF RATS

THERE was once a mouse who lived in terrible fear of a cat that had lain in wait watching for her. She was in great anxiety to know what she could do to escape the threatening danger.

Being prudent and wise she consulted her neighbor, a large and important rat. His lordship the rat had taken up his abode in a very good inn, and had boasted a hundred times that he had no fear for either tom-cat or she-cat. Neither teeth nor claws caused him any anxious thought.

"Dame Mouse," said this boaster, "whatever I do, I cannot, upon my word, chase away this cat that threatens you without some help. But let me call together all the rats hereabouts and I'll play him a sorry trick or two."

The mouse curtsied humbly her thanks and the rat ran with speed to the head-quarters; that is to say to the larder, where the rats were in the habit of assembling. Arriving out of breath and perturbed in mind he found them making a great feast at the expense of their host.

"What ails you?" asked one of the feasters. "Speak!"

"In two words," answered he, "the reason for my coming among you in this way is simply that it has become absolutely necessary to help the mice; for Grimalkin is abroad, making terrible slaughter among them. This, the most devilish of cats, will, when she has no mice left, turn her attention to the eating of rats."

"He says what is true," cried they all. "To arms, to arms!" Nothing could stem the tide of their impetuosity; although, it is said, a few she-rats shed tears. It was no matter. Every one overhauled his equipment, and filled his wallet with cheese. To risk life was the determination of all. They set off, as if to a fete, with happy minds and joyful hearts.

Alas, for the mouse! These warriors were a moment too late. The cat had her already by the head. Advancing at the double the rats ran to the succor of their good little friend; but the cat swore, and stalked away in front of the enemy, having no intention of surrendering her prey.

At the sound of the cat's defiance, the prudent rats, fearing ill fate, beat a safe retreat without carrying any farther their intended onslaught. Each one ran to his hole, and whenever any ventured out again it was always with the utmost caution to avoid the cat.

ÆSOP'S FABLES

THE COCK AND THE PEARL

A COCK was once strutting up and down the farmyard among the hens when suddenly he saw something shining amid the straw. "Ho! ho!" quoth he, "that's for me," and soon rooted it out from beneath the straw. What did it turn out to be but a Pearl that by some chance had been lost in the yard? "You may be a treasure," quoth Master Cock, "to men that prize you, but for me I would rather have a single barley-corn than a peck of pearls."

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

A LION was awakened from sleep by a Mouse running over his face. Rising up in anger, he caught him and was about to kill him, when the Mouse piteously entreated, saying: "If you would only spare my life, I would be sure to repay your kindness." The Lion laughed and let him go. It happened shortly after this that the Lion was caught by some hunters, who bound him by strong ropes to the ground. The Mouse, recognizing his roar, came up, and gnawed the rope with his teeth, and setting him free, exclaimed: "You ridiculed the idea of my ever being able to help you, not expecting to receive from me any repayment of your favor; but now you know that it is possible for even a Mouse to confer benefits on a Lion."

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

A WOLF meeting with a Lamb astray from the fold, resolved not to lay violent hands on him, but to find some plea, which should justify to the Lamb himself his right to eat him. He thus addressed him: "Sirrah, last year you grossly insulted me." "Indeed," bleated the Lamb in a mournful tone of voice, "I was not then born." Then said the Wolf, "You feed in my pasture." "No, good sir," replied the Lamb, "I have not yet tasted grass." Again said the Wolf, "You drink of my well." "No," exclaimed the Lamb, "I never yet drank water, for as yet my mother's milk is both food and drink to me." On which the Wolf seized him, and ate him up, saying, "Well! I won't remain supperless, even though you refute every one of my imputations."

The tyrant will always find a pretext for his tyranny.

THE BAT AND THE WEASELS

A BAT falling upon the ground was caught by a Weasel, of whom he earnestly sought his life. The Weasel refused, saying that he was by nature the enemy of all birds. The Bat assured him that he was not a bird, but a mouse, and thus saved his life. Shortly afterwards the Bat again fell on the ground, and was caught by another Weasel, whom he likewise entreated not to eat him. The Weasel said that he had a special hostility to mice. The Bat assured him that he was not a mouse, but a bat; and thus a second time escaped.

It is wise to turn circumstances to good account.

THE ASS AND THE GRASSHOPPER

AN Ass, having heard some Grasshoppers chirping, was highly enchanted; and, desiring to possess the same charms of melody, demanded what sort of food they lived on, to give them such beautiful voices. They replied, "The dew." The Ass resolved that he would only live upon dew, and in a short time died of hunger.

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

A WOLF, having a bone stuck in his throat, hired a Crane, for a large sum, to put her head into his throat and draw out the bone. When the Crane had extracted the bone, and demanded the promised payment, the Wolf, grinning and grinding his teeth, exclaimed: "Why, you have surely already a sufficient recompense, in having been permitted to draw out your head in safety from the mouth and jaws of a wolf."

In serving the wicked, expect no reward, and be thankful if you escape injury for your pains.

THE ANTS AND THE GRASSHOPPER

THE Ants were employing a fine winter's day in drying grain collected in the summer time. A Grasshopper, perishing with famine, passed by and earnestly begged for a little food. The Ants inquired of him, "Why did you not treasure up food during the summer?" He replied, "I had not leisure enough. I passed the days in singing." They then said in derision: "If you were foolish enough to sing all the summer, you must dance supperless to bed in the winter."

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

A HARE one day ridiculed the short feet and slow pace of the Tortoise. The latter, laughing, said: "Though you be swift as the wind, I will beat you in a race." The Hare, deeming her assertion to be simply impossible, assented to the proposal; and they agreed that the Fox should choose the course, and fix the goal. On the day appointed for the race they started together. The Tortoise never for a moment stopped, but went on with a slow but steady pace straight to the end of the course. The Hare, trusting to his native swiftness, cared little about the race, and lying down by the wayside, fell fast asleep. At last waking up, and moving as fast as he could, he saw the Tortoise had reached the goal, and was comfortably dozing after her fatigue.

THE DOG AND THE SHADOW

A DOG, crossing a bridge over a stream with a piece of flesh in his mouth, saw his own shadow in the water, and took it for that of another Dog, with a piece of meat double his own in size. He therefore let go his own, and fiercely attacked the other Dog, to get his larger piece from him. He thus lost both: that which he grasped at in the water, because it was a shadow; and his own, because the stream swept it away.

THE FARMER AND THE SNAKE

A FARMER found in the winter time a Snake stiff and frozen with cold. He had compassion on it, and taking it up placed it in his bosom. The Snake on being thawed by the warmth quickly revived, when, resuming its natural instincts, he bit his benefactor, inflicting on him a mortal wound. The Farmer said with his latest breath, "I am rightly served for pitying a scoundrel!"

The greatest benefits will not bind the ungrateful.

THE FARMER AND THE STORK

A FARMER placed nets on his newly-sown plough lands, and caught a quantity of Cranes, which came to pick up his seed. With them he trapped a Stork also. The Stork, having his leg fractured by the net, earnestly besought the Farmer to spare his life. "Pray, save me, Master," he said, "and let me go free this once. My broken limb should excite your pity. Besides, I am no Crane, I am a Stork, a bird of excellent character; and see how I love and slave for my father and mother. Look too, at my feathers, they are not the least like to those of a Crane." The Farmer laughed aloud, and said, "It may be all as you say; I only know this, I have taken you with these robbers, the Cranes, and you must die in their company."

Birds of a feather flock together.

THE ASS, THE FOX, AND THE LION

THE Ass and the Fox, having entered into partnership together for their mutual protection, went out into the forest to hunt. They had not proceeded far, when they met a Lion. The Fox, seeing the imminency of the danger, approached the Lion, and promised to contrive for him the capture of the Ass, if he would pledge his word that his own life should not be endangered. On his assuring him that he would not injure him, the Fox led the Ass to a deep pit, and contrived that he should fall into it. The Lion, seeing that the Ass was secured, immediately clutched the Fox, and then attacked the Ass at his leisure.

THE TORTOISE AND THE EAGLE

A TORTOISE, lazily basking in the sun, complained to the sea-birds of her hard fate, that no one would teach her to fly. An Eagle hovering near, heard her lamentation, and demanded what reward she would give him, if he would take her aloft, and float her in the air. "I will give you," she said, "all the riches of the Red Sea." "I will teach you to fly then," said the Eagle; and taking her up in his talons, he carried her almost to the clouds — when suddenly letting her go, she fell on a lofty mountain, and dashed her shell to pieces. The Tortoise exclaimed in the moment of death: "I have deserved my present fate; for what had I to do with wings and clouds, who can with difficulty move about on the earth?"

If men had all they wished, they would be often ruined.

THE FOX AND THE GOAT

A FOX, having fallen into a deep well, was detained a prisoner there, as he could find no means of escape. A Goat, overcome with thirst, came to the same well, and, seeing the Fox, inquired if the water was good. The Fox, concealing his sad plight under a merry guise, indulged in a lavish praise of the water, saying it was beyond measure excellent, and encouraged him to descend. The Goat, mindful only of his thirst, thoughtlessly jumped down, when just as he quenched his thirst, the Fox informed him of the difficulty they were both in, and suggested a scheme for their common escape. "If," said he, "you will place your fore-feet upon the wall and bend your head, I will run up your back and escape, and will help you out afterwards." On the Goat readily assenting to this second proposal, the Fox leapt upon his back, and steadying himself with the Goat's horns, reached in safety the mouth of the well, when he immediately made off as fast as he could. The Goat upbraided him with the breach of his bargain, when he turned round and cried out: "You foolish old fellow! If you had as many brains in your head as you have hairs in your beard, you would never have gone down before you had inspected the way up, nor have exposed yourself to dangers from which you had no means of escape."

Look before you leap.

THE SICK LION

A LION, being unable from old age and infirmities to provide himself with food by force, resolved to do so by artifice. He betook himself to his den, and lying down there, pretended to be sick, taking care that his sickness should be publicly known. The beasts expressed their sorrow, and came one by one to his den to visit him, when the Lion devoured them. After many of the beasts had thus disappeared, the Fox discovered the trick, and presenting himself to the Lion, stood on the outside of the cave, at a respectful distance, and asked of him how he did; to whom he replied, "I am very middling, but why do you stand without? pray enter within to talk with me." The Fox replied, "No, thank you, I notice that there are many prints of feet entering your cave, but I see no trace of any returning."

He is wise who is warned by the misfortunes of others.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

ONCE upon a time a Wolf resolved to disguise his nature by his habit, so that he might get food without stint. Encased in the skin of a sheep, he pastured with the flock, beguiling the shepherd by his artifice. In the evening he was shut up by the shepherd in the fold; the gate was closed, and the entrance made thoroughly secure. The shepherd coming into the fold during the night to provide food for the morrow, caught up the Wolf, instead of a sheep, and killed him with his knife in the fold.

Harm seek, harm find.

THE FROGS ASKING FOR A KING

THE Frogs, grieved at having no established Ruler, sent ambassadors to Jupiter entreating for a King. He, perceiving their simplicity, cast down a huge log into the lake. The Frogs, terrified at the splash occasioned by its fall, hid themselves in the depths of the pool. But no sooner did they see that the huge log remained motionless, than they swam again to the top of the water, dismissed their fears, and came so to despise it as to climb up, and to squat upon it. After some time they began to think themselves ill-treated in the appointment of so inert a Ruler, and sent a second deputation to Jupiter to pray that he would set over them another sovereign. He then gave them an Eel to govern them. When the Frogs discovered his easy good nature, they yet a third time sent to Jupiter to beg that he would once more choose for them another King. Jupiter, displeased at their complaints, sent a Heron, who preyed upon the Frogs day by day till there were none left to croak upon the Lake.

THE LABORER AND THE SNAKE

A SNAKE, having made his hole close to the porch of a cottage, inflicted a severe bite on the Cottager's infant son, of which he died, to the great grief of his parents. The father resolved to kill the Snake, and the next day, on its coming out of its hole for food, took up his axe; but, making too much haste to hit him as he wriggled away, missed his head, and cut off only the end of his tail. After some time the Cottager, afraid lest the Snake should bite him also, endeavored to make peace, and placed some bread and salt in his hole. The Snake, slightly hissing, said: "There can henceforth be no peace between us; for whenever I see you I shall remember the loss of my tail, and whenever you see me you will be thinking of the death of your son."

No one truly forgets injuries in the presence of him who caused the injury.

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THE ASS AND THE MULE

A MULETEER set forth on a journey, driving before him an Ass and a Mule, both well laden. The Ass, as long as he travelled along the plain, carried his load with ease; but when he began to ascend the steep path of the mountain, he felt his load to be more than he could bear. He entreated his companion to relieve him of a small portion, that he might carry home the rest; but the Mule paid no attention to the request. The Ass shortly afterwards fell down dead under his burden. The Muleteer, not knowing what else to do in so wild a region, placed upon the Mule the load carried by the Ass in addition to his own, and at the top of all placed the hide of the Ass, after he had flayed him. The Mule, groaning beneath his heavy burden, said thus to himself: "I am treated according to my deserts. If I had only been willing to assist the Ass a little in his need, I should not now be bearing, together with his burden, himself as well."

THE OXEN AND THE BUTCHERS

THE Oxen once on a time sought to destroy the Butchers, who practised a trade destructive to their race. They assembled on a certain day to carry out their purpose, and sharpened their horns for the contest. One of them, an exceedingly old one (for many a field had he ploughed), thus spoke: "These Butchers, it is true, slaughter us, but they do so with skilful hands, and with no unnecessary pain. If we get rid of them, we shall fall into the hands of unskilful operators, and thus suffer a double death: for you may be assured, that though all the Butchers should perish, yet will men never want beef."

Do not be in a hurry to change one evil for another.

THE LION, THE MOUSE, AND THE FOX

A LION, fatigued by the heat of a summer's day, fell fast asleep in his den. A Mouse ran over his mane and ears, and woke him from his slumbers. He rose up and shook himself in great wrath, and searched every corner of his den to find the Mouse. A Fox seeing him said: "A fine Lion you are, to be frightened of a Mouse." "'Tis not the Mouse I fear," said the Lion; "I resent his familiarity and ill-breeding."

Little liberties are great offences.

THE FOX WHO HAD LOST HIS TAIL

A FOX, caught in a trap, escaped with the loss of his "brush." Henceforth feeling his life a burden from the shame and ridicule to which he was exposed, he schemed to bring all the other Foxes into a like condition with himself, that in the common loss he might the better conceal his own deprivation. He assembled a good many Foxes, and publicly advised them to cut off their tails, saying "that they would not only look much better without them, but that they would get rid of the weight of the brush, which was a very great inconvenience." One of them interrupting him said, "If you had not yourself lost your tail, my friend, you would not thus counsel us."

THE VAIN JACKDAW

JUPITER determined, it is said, to create a sovereign over the birds; and made proclamation that, on a certain day, they should all present themselves before him, when he would himself choose the most beautiful among them to be king. The Jackdaw, knowing his own ugliness, searched through the woods and fields, and collected the feathers which had fallen from the wings of his companions, and stuck them in all parts of his body, hoping thereby to make himself the most beautiful of all. When the appointed day arrived, and the birds had assembled before Jupiter, the Jackdaw also made his appearance in his many-feathered finery. On Jupiter proposing to make him king, on account of the beauty of his plumage, the birds indignantly protested, and each plucking from him his own feathers, the Jackdaw was again nothing but a Jackdaw.

THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP

"WHY should there always be this internecine and implacable warfare between us?" said the Wolves to the Sheep. "Those evil-disposed Dogs have much to answer for. They always bark whenever we approach you, and attack us before we have done any harm. If you would only dismiss them from your heels, there might soon be treaties of peace and of reconciliation between us." The Sheep, poor silly creatures! were easily beguiled, and dismissed the Dogs. The Wolves destroyed the unguarded flock at their own pleasure.

THE OX AND THE FROG

AN Ox, drinking at a pool, trod on a brood of young frogs, and crushed one of them to death. The mother coming up, and missing one of her sons, inquired of his brothers what had become of him. "He is dead, dear mother; for just now a very huge beast with four great feet came to the pool, and crushed him to death with his cloven heel." The Frog, puffing herself out, inquired, "if the beast was as big as that in size." "Cease, mother, to puff yourself out," said her son, "and do not be angry; for you would, I assure you, sooner burst than successfully imitate the hugeness of that monster."

THE FIGHTING COCKS AND THE EAGLE

TWO Game Cocks were fiercely fighting for the mastery of the farm-yard. One at last put the other to flight. The vanquished Cock skulked away and hid himself in a quiet corner. The conqueror, flying up to a high wall, flapped his wings and crowed exultingly with all his might. An Eagle sailing through the air pounced upon him, and carried him off in his talons. The vanquished Cock immediately came out of his corner, and ruled henceforth with undisputed mastery.

Pride goes before destruction.

THE FOX AND THE MONKEY

A MONKEY once danced in an assembly of the Beasts, and so pleased them all by his performance that they elected him their King. A Fox, envying him the honor, discovered a piece of meat lying in a trap, and leading the Monkey to the place where, it was said, "that she had found a store, but had not used it, but had kept it for him as treasure trove of his kingdom, and counselled him to lay hold of it." The Monkey approached carelessly, and was caught in the trap; and on his accusing the Fox of purposely leading him into the snare, she replied, "O Monkey, and are you, with such a mind as yours, going to be King over the Beasts?"

THE HAWK, THE KITE, AND THE PIGEONS

THE Pigeons, terrified by the appearance of a Kite, called upon the Hawk to defend them. He at once consented. When they had admitted him into the cote, they found that he made more havoc and slew a larger number of them in one day, than the Kite could pounce upon in a whole year.

Avoid a remedy that is worse than the disease.

THE MOUSE, THE FROG AND THE HAWK

A MOUSE who always lived on the land, by an unlucky chance formed an intimate acquaintance with a Frog, who lived for the most part in the water. The Frog, one day intent on mischief, bound the foot of the Mouse tightly to his own. Thus joined together, the Frog first of all led his friend the Mouse to the meadow where they were accustomed to find their food. After this, he gradually led him towards the pool in which he lived, until he reached the very brink, when suddenly jumping in he dragged the Mouse in with him. The Frog enjoyed the water amazingly, and swam croaking about, as if he had done a meritorious action. The unhappy Mouse was soon suffocated with the water, and his dead body floated about on the surface, tied to the foot of the Frog. A Hawk observed it, and, pouncing upon it with his talons, carried it up aloft. The Frog being still fastened to the leg of the Mouse, was also carried off a prisoner, and was eaten by the Hawk.

Harm hatch, harm catch.

THE WOLF AND THE SHEEP

A WOLF, sorely wounded and bitten by dogs, lay sick and maimed in his lair. Being in want of food, he called to a Sheep, who was passing, and asked him to fetch some water from a stream flowing close beside him. "For," he said, "if you will bring me drink, I will find means to provide myself with meat." "Yes," said the Sheep, "if I should bring you the draught, you would doubtless make me provide the meat also."

Hypocritical speeches are easily seen through.

THE FOX AND THE CROW

A CROW having stolen a bit of flesh, perched in a tree, and held it in her beak. A Fox seeing her, longed to possess himself of the flesh: and by a wily stratagem succeeded. "How handsome is the Crow," he exclaimed, "in the beauty of her shape and in the fairness of her complexion! Oh, if her voice were only equal to her beauty, she would deservedly be considered the Queen of Birds!" This he said deceitfully; but the Crow, anxious to refute the reflection cast upon her voice, set up a loud caw, and dropped the flesh. The Fox quickly picked it up, and thus addressed the Crow: "My good Crow, your voice is right enough, but your wit is wanting."

THE WILD ASS AND THE LION

A WILD Ass and a Lion entered into an alliance that they might capture the beasts of the forest with the greater ease. The Lion agreed to assist the Wild Ass with his strength, while the Wild Ass gave the Lion the benefit of his greater speed. When they had taken as many beasts as their necessities required, the Lion undertook to distribute the prey, and for this purpose divided it into three shares. "I will take the first share," he said, "because I am King: and the second share, as a partner with you in the chase: and the third share (believe me) will be a source of great evil to you, unless you willingly resign it to me, and set off as fast as you can."

Might makes right.

THE STAG IN THE OX-STALL

A STAG, hardly pressed by the hounds, and blind through fear to the danger he was running into, took shelter in a farm-yard, and hid himself in a shed among the oxen. An Ox gave him this kindly warning: "O unhappy creature! why should you thus, of your own accord, incur destruction, and trust yourself in the house of your enemy?" The Stag replied: "Do you only suffer me, friend, to stay where I am, and I will undertake to find some favorable opportunity of effecting my escape." At the approach of the evening the herdsman came to feed his cattle, but did not see the Stag; and even the farm-bailiff, with several laborers, passed through the shed, and failed to notice him. The Stag, congratulating himself on his safety, began to express his sincere thanks to the Oxen who had kindly afforded him help in the hour of need. One of them again answered him: "We indeed wish you well, but the danger is not over. There is one other yet to pass through the shed, who has as it were a hundred eyes, and, until he has come and gone, your life is still in peril." At that moment the master himself entered, and having had to complain that his oxen had not been properly fed, he went up to their racks, and cried out: "Why is there such a scarcity of fodder? There is not half enough straw for them to lie on. Those lazy fellows have not even swept the cobwebs away." While he thus examined everything in turn, he spied the tips of the antlers of the Stag peeping out of the straw. Then summoning his laborers, he ordered that the Stag should be seized, and killed.

THE LION AND THE BOAR

ON a summer day, when the great heat induced a general thirst, a Lion and a Boar came at the same moment to a small well to drink. They fiercely disputed which of them should drink first, and were soon engaged in the agonies of a mortal combat. On their stopping on a sudden to take breath for the fiercer renewal of the strife, they saw some Vultures waiting in the distance to feast on the one which should fall first. They at once made up their quarrel, saying, "It is better for us to make friends, than to become the food of Crows or Vultures."

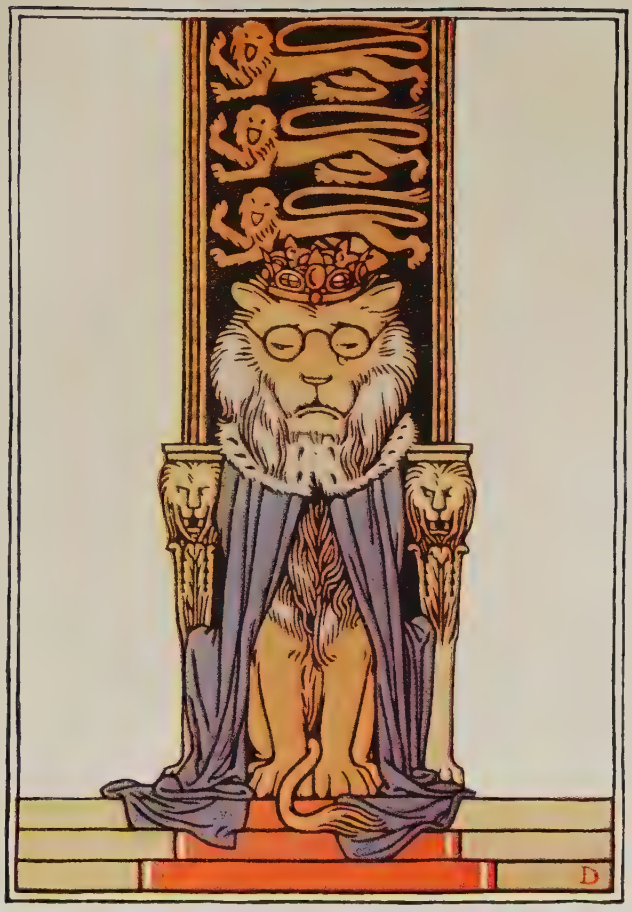
THE ONE-EYED DOE

A DOE, blind of an eye, was accustomed to graze as near to the edge of the cliff as she possibly could, in the hope of securing her greater safety. She turned her sound eye towards the land, that she might get the earliest tidings of the approach of hunter or hound, and her injured eye towards the sea, from whence she entertained no anticipation of danger. Some boatmen sailing by, saw her, and taking a successful aim, mortally wounded her. Yielding up her breath, she gasped forth this lament: "O wretched creature that I am! to take such precaution against the land, and after all to find this sea-shore, to which I had come for safety, so much more perilous."

THE ASS, THE COCK, AND THE LION

AN Ass and a Cock were in a straw-yard together, when a Lion, desperate from hunger, approached the spot. He was about to spring upon the Ass, when the Cock (to the sound of whose voice the Lion, it is said, has a singular aversion) crowed loudly, and the Lion fled away as fast as he could. The Ass observing his trepidation at the mere crowing of a Cock, summoned courage to attack him and galloped after him for that purpose. He had run no long distance, when the Lion turning about, seized him and tore him to pieces.

False confidence often leads into danger.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THE OLD LION

A LION, worn out with years, and powerless from disease, lay on the ground at the point of death. A Boar rushed upon him, and avenged with a stroke of his tusks a long-remembered injury. Shortly afterwards the Bull with his horns gored him as if he were an enemy. When the Ass saw that the huge beast could be assailed with impunity, he let drive at his forehead with his heels. The expiring Lion said, "I have reluctantly brooked the insults of the brave, but to be compelled to endure contumely from thee, a disgrace to Nature, is indeed to die a double death."

THE ASS AND HIS SHADOW

A TRAVELLER hired an Ass to convey him to a distant place. The day being intensely hot, and the sun shining in its strength, the traveller stopped to rest, and sought shelter from the heat under the Shadow of the Ass. As this afforded only protection for one, and as the traveller and the owner of the Ass both claimed it, a violent dispute arose between them as to which of them had the right to it. The owner maintained that he had let the Ass only, and not his Shadow. The traveller asserted that he had, with the hire of the Ass, hired his Shadow also. The quarrel proceeded from words to blows, and while the men fought the Ass galloped off.

In quarrelling about the shadow we often lose the substance.

THE LION IN A FARM-YARD

A LION entered a farm-yard. The farmer, wishing to catch him, shut the gate. The Lion, when he found that he could not escape, flew upon the sheep, and killed them, and then attacked the oxen. The farmer, beginning to be alarmed for his own safety, opened the gate, when the Lion got off as fast as he could. On his departure the farmer grievously lamented the destruction of his sheep and oxen; when his wife, who had been a spectator of all that took place, said, "On my word, you are rightly served; for how could you for a moment think of shutting up a Lion along with you in the farm-yard, when you know that you shake in your shoes if you only hear his roar at ever so great a distance?"

THE BIRDCATCHER, THE PARTRIDGE AND THE COCK

A BIRDCATCHER was about to sit down to a dinner of herbs, when a friend unexpectedly came in. The bird-trap was quite empty, as he had caught nothing. He proceeded to kill a pied Partridge, which he had tamed for a decoy. He entreated thus earnestly for his life: "What would you do without me when next you spread your nets? Who would chirp you to sleep, or call for you the covey of answering birds?" The Birdcatcher spared his life, and determined to pick out a fine young Cock just attaining to his comb. He thus expostulated in piteous tones from his perch: "If you kill me, who will announce to you the appearance of the dawn? Who will wake you to your daily tasks? Or tell you when it is time to visit the bird-trap in the morning?" He replied, "What you say is true. You are a capital bird at telling the time of day. But I and the friend who has come in must have our dinners."

Necessity knows no law.

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THE WOLF AND THE LION

A WOLF, having stolen a lamb from a fold, was carrying him off to his lair. A Lion met him in the path, and, seizing the lamb, took it from him. The Wolf, standing at a safe distance, exclaimed, "You have unrighteously taken that which was mine from me." The Lion jeeringly replied, "It was righteously yours, eh? the gift of a friend?"

THE ANT AND THE DOVE

AN Ant went to the bank of a river to quench its thirst, and, being carried away by the rush of the stream, was on the point of being drowned. A Dove, sitting on a tree overhanging the water, plucked a leaf, and let it fall into the stream close to her. The Ant, climbing on to it, floated in safety to the bank. Shortly afterwards a birdcatcher came and stood under the tree, and laid his lime-twigs for the Dove, which sat in the branches. The Ant, perceiving his design, stung him in the foot. He suddenly threw down the twigs, and thereupon made the Dove take wing.

The grateful heart will always find opportunities to show its gratitude.

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THE MONKEY AND THE FISHERMEN

A MONKEY perched upon a lofty tree saw some Fishermen casting their nets into a river, and narrowly watched their proceedings. The Fishermen after a while gave over fishing, and, on going home to dinner, left their nets upon the bank. The Monkey, who is the most imitative of animals, descended from the tree-top, and endeavored to do as they had done. Having handled the net, he threw it into the river, but became entangled in the meshes. When drowning, he said to himself, "I am rightly served; for what business had I who had never handled a net to try and catch fish?"

THE HARES AND THE FROGS

THE Hares, oppressed with a sense of their own exceeding timidity, and weary of the perpetual alarm to which they were exposed, with one accord determined to put an end to themselves and their troubles, by jumping from a lofty precipice into a deep lake below. As they scampered off in a very numerous body to carry out their resolve, the Frogs lying on the banks of the lake heard the noise of their feet, and rushed helter-skelter to the deep water for safety. On seeing the rapid disappearance of the Frogs, one of the Hares cried out to this companions: "Stay, my friends, do not do as you intended; for you now see that other creatures who yet live are more timorous than ourselves."

THE SWAN AND THE GOOSE

A CERTAIN rich man bought in the market a Goose and a Swan. He fed the one for his table, and kept the other for the sake of its song. When the time came for killing the Goose, the cook went to take him at night, when it was dark, and he was not able to distinguish one bird from the other, and he caught the Swan instead of the Goose, The Swan, threatened with death, burst forth into song, and thus made himself known by his voice, and preserved his life by his melody.

A word in season is most precious.

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND THEIR ASS

A MILLER and his son were driving their Ass to a neighboring fair to sell him. They had not gone far when they met with a troop of women collected round a well, talking and laughing. "Look there," cried one of them, "did you ever see such fellows, to be trudging along the road on foot when they might ride?" The old man hearing this, quickly made his son mount the Ass, and continued to walk along merrily by his side. Presently they came up to a group of old men in earnest debate. "There," said one of them, "it proves what I was a-saying. What respect is shown to old age in these days? Do you see that idle lad riding while his old father has to walk? Get down, you young scapegrace, and let the old man rest his weary limbs." Upon this the old man made his son dismount, and got up himself. In this manner they had not proceeded far when they met a company of women and children: "Why, you lazy old fellow," cried several tongues at once, "how can you ride upon the beast, while that poor little lad there can hardly keep pace by the side of you?" The good-natured Miller immediately took up his son behind him. They had now almost reached the town.

"Pray, honest friend," said a citizen, "is that Ass your own?" "Yes," said the old man. "Oh, one would not have thought so," said the other, "by the way you load him. Why, you two fellows are better able to carry the poor beast than he you." "Anything to please you," said the old man; "we

can but try." So, alighting with his son, they tied the legs of the Ass together, and by the help of a pole endeavored to carry him on their shoulders over a bridge near the entrance of the town. This entertaining sight brought the people in crowds to laugh at it; till the Ass, not liking the noise, nor the strange handling that he was subject to, broke the cords that bound him, and, tumbling off the pole, fell into the river. Upon this, the old man, vexed and ashamed, made the best of his way home again, convinced that by endeavoring to please everybody he had pleased nobody, and lost his Ass into the bargain.

THE TWO FROGS

TWO Frogs dwelt in the same pool. The pool being dried up under the summer's heat, they left it, and set out together for another home. As they went along they chanced to pass a deep well, amply supplied with water, on seeing which one of the Frogs said to the other, "Let us descend and make our abode in this well: it will furnish us with shelter and food." The other replied with greater caution, "But suppose the water should fail us, how can we get out again from so great a depth?"

Do nothing without a regard to the consequences.

THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX

A LION and a Bear seized upon a Kid at the same moment, and fought fiercely for its possession. When they had fearfully lacerated each other, and were faint from the long combat, they lay down exhausted with fatigue. A Fox, who had gone round them at a distance several times, saw them both stretched on the ground, and the Kid lying untouched in the middle, ran in between them, and seizing the Kid scampered off as fast as he could. The Lion and the Bear saw him, but not being able to get up, said, "Woe betide us, that we should have fought and belabored ourselves only to serve the turn of a Fox!"

It sometimes happens that one man has all the toil, and another all the profit.

THE LION AND THE HARE

A LION came across a Hare, who was fast asleep on her form. He was just in the act of seizing her, when a fine young Hart trotted by, and he left the Hare to follow him. The Hare, scared by the noise, awoke, and scudded away. The Lion was not able after a long chase to catch the Hart, and returned to feed upon the Hare. On finding that the Hare also had run off, he said, "I am rightly served, for having let go the food that I had in my hand for the chance of obtaining more."

THE LION, THE FOX, AND THE ASS

THE Lion, the Fox, and the Ass entered into an agreement to assist each other in the chase. Having secured a large booty, the Lion, on their return from the forest, asked the Ass to allot his due portion to each of the three partners in the treaty. The Ass carefully divided the spoil into three equal shares, and modestly requested the two others to make the first choice. The Lion, bursting out into a great rage, devoured the Ass. Then he requested the Fox to do him the favor to make a division. The Fox accumulated all that they had killed into one large heap, and left to himself the smallest possible morsel. The Lion said, "Who has taught you, my very excellent fellow, the art of division? You are perfect to a fraction." He replied, "I learnt it from the Ass, by witnessing his fate."

Happy is the man who learns from the misfortunes of others.

THE HARE AND THE HOUND

A HOUND having started a Hare from his form, after a long run, gave up the chase. A Goat-herd seeing him stop, mocked him, saying, "The little one is the best runner of the two." The Hound replied, "You do not see the difference between us: I was only running for a dinner, but he, for his life."

THE PEACOCK AND THE CRANE

A PEACOCK spreading its gorgeous tail mocked a Crane that passed by, ridiculing the ashen hue of its plumage, and saying, "I am robed, like a king, in gold and purple, and all the colors of the rainbow; while you have not a bit of color on your wings." "True," replied the Crane; "but I soar to the heights of heaven, and lift up my voice to the stars, while you walk below, like a cock, among the birds of the dunghill."

Fine feathers don't make fine birds.

THE ASS AND THE FROGS

AN Ass, carrying a load of wood, passed through a pond. As he was crossing through the water he lost his footing, and stumbled and fell, and not being able to rise on account of his load, he groaned heavily. Some Frogs frequenting the pool heard his lamentation, and said, "What would you do if you had to live here always as we do, when you make such a fuss about a mere fall into the water?"

Men often bear little grievances with less courage than they do large misfortunes.

THE CROW AND RAVEN

A CROW was very jealous of the Raven, because he was considered a bird of good omen, and always attracted the attention of men, as indicating by his flight the good or evil course of future events. Seeing some travellers approaching, she flew up into a tree, and perching herself on one of the branches, cawed as loudly as she could. The travellers turned towards the sound, and wondered what it boded, when one of them said to his companion, "Let us proceed on our journey, my friend, for it is only the caw of a crow, and her cry, you know, is no omen."

Those who assume a character which does not belong to them, only make themselves ridiculous.

THE END